



Community Engagement Policy

INTENT

Provide commitment and direction for Council's Community Engagement activities and establish a consistent, coordinated approach of including community participation in Council's decision-making process where appropriate.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Councillors and staff of Balonne Shire Council across all areas of Council's operations. The Community Engagement Policy defines the mechanisms which Council uses to engage the community. It provides Councillors and staff with processes to identify engagement opportunities and to maximise the benefits of community engagement, as outlined in the International Association of Public Participation – IAP2 Spectrum.

DEFINITIONS

Council defines successful **community engagement** as:

An effective two-way relationship between Balonne Shire Council and the Balonne Shire community, in which both sides are well informed and collaborate to improve Council services and ensure responsible decision making in the Shire.

The core structure of community engagement is based on the following International Association of Public Participation – IAP² Spectrum:

- Informing:** providing the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding problems/opportunities, solutions/alternatives and decisions.
- Consulting:** asking communities for ideas, testing support for a proposal or obtaining feedback on preferences when there are options available.
- Involving:** working directly with the public to ensure that public concerns and needs are consistently understood and considered.
- Collaborating:** partnering with the public in every aspect of the decision, including the development of alternative solutions and the identification of the preferred solution.
- Empowering:** placing final decision making in the hands of the public.

PROVISIONS

1. LEGISLATION

This Policy has been prepared after consideration of the following plans and policies:

Balonne Shire Community Plan 2011-2021



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The communities' needs and expectations are identified in the Balonne Shire 2025 Plan. The 2025 Plan was developed after extensive consultation with the Balonne Shire community and other key stakeholders. The information contained in the Plan outlines community goals, strategy and priorities upon which the Corporate Plan has been developed.

Balonne Shire Council Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan is the link between our community's needs and expectations and the operational activities undertaken by Council. It identifies Our Customers as one of the Council's core values.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

All Councillors and operational staff will play key roles in engaging with the community.

Councillors have responsibility for engaging with their local and regional communities; and operational staff has responsibility for engaging the community in their day-to-day business activities and on agreed projects.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

Balonne Shire Council offers various ways for community members to participate in the decision-making process and strives to increase the representation of views and opinions of our diverse community.

Council believes it can make better decisions by actively seeking input early in the decision making and policy development process.

Council will use appropriate IAP² community engagement strategies and techniques depending upon the issue or project, its particular circumstances and the target audience.

Each principle seeks to clarify the purpose of why Council engages with the community and guide how that engagement occurs.

The Community Engagement Strategy will enable the implementation and ongoing use of community engagement activities throughout a range of Balonne Shire Council activities.